

*M. J. O'Connor*

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
BUREAU OF FISHERIES

YEARLY REPORT OF WORK DONE DURING  
FISHING SEASON IN SOUTH EASTERN ALASKA 1924

U.S. BUREAU OF FISHERIES  
RECEIVED  
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Juneau, Alaska

ALASKA

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FISHERIES

Active operations began after arrival at Juneau, April 26, where two days were spent preparing to go on seal patrol. Left Juneau April 28, on Bureau's boat, "Petrol," for Sitka, arriving April 30, where eight seal skins were authenticated, on May 1. *Bureau boat "Petrol"*

Left Sitka on May 1 for sealing grounds and cruised off Biorka Island. There were no sealing boats out after seal or no Indians camped at any of the following sealing camps: Simon's Bay, Orka Island or Tavar Island. Cruised around Crawfish Inlet, Necker Island group, and fifty-five miles off shore. There were no sealing boats and very few halibut boats seen. There were very few seal seen off shore. On May 4 ran off shore thirty miles and hove to for twenty-four hours. During that time we drifted twenty-five miles to sea. We were in the track of halibut boats going from Prince Rupert, Ketchikan, and from the banks at Yakutat. There were only two seals seen at about the one hundred fathom curve, which is only twelve miles off shore, the seals either having migrated north or the track of migration may have been farther to sea.

Stayed at Sitka Hot Springs, Biorka and Crawfish Inlet until May 9 and returned to Juneau to attend Court in the case of the Alaska Pacific Fisheries (Attention is invited to special report of May 13, 1924) stopping on the way from Sitka at Hanus Bay to inspect operations of taking trout for State of Wash. Fish and Game Club (Attention is invited to daily report of May 10-24 and special report of May 14, 1924) arriving at Columbia Cannery of Alaska Consolidated Canneries on May 10. May 11, a trap location was measured on the west side of Admiralty Island 1 1/4 miles south of Fishery Point (Attention is invited to daily report of May 11, 1924) Arrived at Juneau on May 12, where testimony was given in case of Alaska Pacific Fisheries Floating Trap # 14, territorial license 23-274 (Attention is invited to special report of May 13 1924).

Left Juneau May 20 with Inspector for War Department on board who was on a tour of inspection to see that all traps and other obstructions to navigation had lights between Juneau and Cape Fox. Stopping on way north from Ketchikan at Lake Bay Cannery, Prince of Wales Island, and from there went to Barnes Lake to inspect Mr. R.E. Clanton's operations of taking trout in Barnes Lake, Sweetwater Lake and creeks flowing into Sweetwater Lake. (Attention is invited to special report of May 25, 1924) Left Lake Bay to inspect traps and other obstructions to navigation and

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and to see that they were lighted along Sumner Strait and Frederick Sound. Arrived at Cape Bendel at eleven o'clock P.M. on May 25, where a trap of Libby McNeil & Libby was found without a light. Went through Frederick Sound, Chatham Strait and Icy Strait on the above inspection trip, arriving at Juneau on May 28.

Left Juneau On June 5 for Wrangell, to which place the writer was assigned for fishery operations during the season of 1924. The work done in this district was the preparing and painting of stream watchmen's skiffs, the delivery of the launch, "Puffin", to Yes Bay Hatchery, and the watching of salmon <sup>in Salmon Bay</sup> to prevent illegal fishing until July 1. (There was only one violation of the fishery laws up to July 1--Violation of Sec. 3 of Act of June 6, 1924 and also of Sec 1, Ch. 94, of Session Laws of Alaska, 1923. Attention is invited to special and daily reports of June 23.) Then came the placing of watchmen at their several stations and the tagging of salmon.

Tagging of salmon began at Ruins Point on July 12 and continued on 19-26-27 and Aug. 3-10-17 inclusive. There were 987 salmon tagged as follows: Reds 250, Pinks 250, Cohoes 250 and Chums 237. (Attention is invited to special report tagging salmon) Traps were visited during July beginning on Sat. July 12 and continuing during weekly closed period of each week, there being very few traps in Sumner Strait. After finishing the salmon tagging at Ruins Point, there was more time to inspect traps. The remainder of the weeks was spent in visiting stream watchmen and creeks in the district to try and get the dates on which salmon showed in the creeks and in what quantities, if possible, also in visiting the different seining areas to prevent any infractions of the law. On July 14, a trap was found in Lemly Channel, belonging to Burnett Inlet Packing Co., license # 24312. Lemly Channel is less than 1000 feet in width. (Attention is invited to special report of July 16 and daily report of July 14)

On Aug. 13, the writer visited Affleck Canal where there were 29 seine boats fishing in Kell Bay and Bear Harbor. There has been a very large number of salmon taken out of Kell and Bear Bays and very few salmon went into the creeks at those points during the summer. There were also a large number of salmon taken from an unnamed bay inside of Conclusion Island in Sumner Strait. Very few salmon went into the creek at this point. Census of salmon were taken the latter part of Aug. and 1st. and 2nd. of Sept. in the following places; Whale Passage, Eagle Creek, and Thorne Bay on Prince of Wales Island, and Rocky Bay, McHenry Inlet and Olive Cove on Etolin Island. (Attention is invited to special report on salmon census)

The dates on which salmon were seen and the different creeks are as follows;

Kay Sheets Bay	July 5
Tom's Place	July 14
Woodpecker Cove	July 16

Eagle Creek is one of the early creeks in this district that is noted for the Red Salmon runs But Pinks did not show until Aug. 5. Salmon Bay and Lake Bay are likewise noted. In Salmon Bay the writer was informed that Red Salmon started running about May 25.

No salmon were seen in Totem Bay, Alvin Bay, Reed's Bay, Hole in The Wall, up to July 20. There were salmon seen jumping at the mouth of Street's Creek but none seen in the creek or jumping in the lake.

On Aug. 5, the first salmon were seen at Thorne Bay, Vixen Inlet, Windy Bay, Sunshine Bay, Santa Ann Inlet, and McHenry Anchorage and Inlet.

The first salmon were seen in Whale Passage, Prince of Wales Island, on Aug. 6. The only places in the district that there were any fairly large runs of salmon were on and after Aug 12 in Affleck Canal, unnamed bay in side of Conclusion Island, Sumner Strait, Whale Passage, and in Thorne Bay, which bay was closed and no fishing allowed. There were quite a lot of fish in Ernest Sound but no large schools in any one place. None of the traps in the district caught any large quantity of fish, and the heaviest of the run was after Aug. 20, which was after the closed season. An effort was made after this time to take a census of the salmon in the several creeks of this district, beginning at Kell Bay, Affleck Canal, in which there were about 27,000 salmon spawning in the creek. At Bear Bay, Affleck Canal, there were about 7,500 salmon in the creek while both at Bear Bay and Kell Bay were several thousand outside the creeks that were not going in.

Port Beauclair has four creeks in this bay, two at the head had 240 in one and 60 in the other. Then there is a Red Salmon stream in about 1½ miles of the head which had no salmon in. The creek at the head of the south eastern arm had about 7,500. Amelius Bay Creek at the east arm had about 120 Pinks and in the west arm about 7,000. Louise Cove showed no salmon in creek at this place. At the creek at Colder post office, there were no salmon seen, but a watchman at the marble quarry, who lives near the mouth of the creek, said there were several thousand salmon went into the mouth of the lake. Colder Bay has two creeks flowing into the head-- there were about 7,500 in the one on the east side and 6,000 on the west. No salmon were seen in the creek at Port Protection. At Reed's Bay, one creek is dammed up by logs and

gravel which causes the water to spread below the dam, not leaving enough water for salmon to jump over, though there are good spawning beds above the dam. There were about 150 salmon below the dam.

Alvin Bay showed about 50 salmon in the creek. The stream watchman, ~~Cliff~~ McKay, at Seclusion Harbor reported about 10,000 Pinks and 18,000 Chums. There are three creeks flowing into Three Mile Arm Bay and there were about 12,000 7,000 and 5,000 salmon in these three streams. There were about 8,000 salmon at the north arm of Three Mile Arm. At ~~Wright's~~ <sup>Ratz</sup> Harbor there were about 8,000 salmon seen in the creek about a mile above high tide. At Black Bear Creek, near Union Bay, there were about 10,000 Pink Salmon seen. At Vixen Inlet -- went up this creek about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles -- there were about 28,000 salmon. Quite Harbor, Etolin Island, there were about 100 and about 7,000 at Steamer Bay. Unnamed creek,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles north of Narrows Point, Prince of Wales Island, had only about 300 salmon. The creek in Coffman Cove had about 200. Exchange Cove had about 1,600. There were five creeks visited between Red Bay and Port Baker in which there were no salmon seen. About 150 were seen in the creek at Totem Bay. Douglas Bay has two creeks flowing into it; there were about 600 in one and none in the other. Two creeks were visited in Duncan Canal but the water was so high and discolored that no fish could be seen even if there. The same is true of Kah Sheets Bay, St. John's Harbor, and the creek at December Point, Metcalf Island, near the mouth of Wrangell Narrows.

Had to give up taking census, as the water was too high and discolored, and wait until it went down again. We were then ordered to Ketchikan from where we went to Moria Sound at which place we <sup>with</sup> found a lot of salmon in the west arm but none in three miles of Dickman Cove. There were none in the south arm nor at Keegan Cove though there were many out in the bay. The seine crews were getting few though they could be seen finning on top of the water. They were all Chums.

We went from Moria Sound to Cholmondely Sound where there were a few salmon, and seine boats fishing but there were no salmon in any of the creeks visited or none could be seen finning, perhaps on account of the discoloration of water.

The writer was sent to Craig and Bay View at Klawack Inlet to investigate herring fisheries at those places. It was found that the fishermen at Craig did not want the barge, "Fort Union", of the Puget Sound Production Co., which was moored at Klawack Inlet, to take herring for oil and meal. They wanted the herring to be used for halibut bait. The Indians at Klawack or Bay View wanted the herring to be preserved for their food product, as Klawack Inlet and Salt Lake were the only places on the west coast of Prince of Wales

Island where the herring came in large quantities and they very strongly objected to the above named Company taking any for oil and meal purposes, as this was the only fish that they were sure of getting enough of for food, right at their door. They also asked that Klawack Inlet and Salt Lake be closed to herring fishing for commercial purposes, from a point on the North end of Klawack Island due South ~~of~~ the red light at the entrance of Klawack Harbor, thence due North to Cemetery Point, thence due North to a point on Prince of Wales Island, thus closing fishing for herring, commercially, in Klawack Inlet and Salt Lake. They also request that a closed season on all commercial herring fishing on the West Coast of Prince of Wales Island, be given during the spawning season, March 1st. to May 1st. inclusive. ( Attention is invited to Daily Report of 25-27-28 and special report on Herring Fishing.)

The early part of November was spent at Wrangell preparing signs and painting lumber to be placed in the following closed areas:-

Anita Bay and Olive Cove, on Etolin Island.  
Thom's Place on Wrangell Island.  
Thorne and Tolstoi Bays, on Prince of Wales Island.

There is a large number of young King salmon taken in by trollers. Many of the fishermen of Wrangell are complaining and ask that the Bureau do something to stop the depletion of the young salmon, which they say can be done by preventing the buyers from taking young King Salmon under six pounds in weight. Many of the fishermen say that there are some fishermen who get into a school of young salmon and stay as long as they will take the hook, while the majority of fishermen claim that they leave the place and go where the salmon are more mature.

During the latter <sup>a</sup>part of November there were nine fishermen arrested for Violation of Section 3 Act. of June 6th. 1924 for setting their nets within less than 100 yards of their own and other gill nets. The cases were called for hearing on November 22nd. 1924 when they entered a plea of Guilty and were fined \$ 50.00 each and costs of \$ 7.00 each. ( Attention is called to Daily Report of Nov. 19th. Nov. 21st. and Nov. 22nd, and Special Report of Fishery Violation under date of Nov. 24th. 1924. )

#### RECOMMENDATIONS.

The writer recommends that Salmon Bay be closed 500 yards outside the Mouth, as the early Red Salmon going in there come out and are taken in seines just outside the present mouth.

That also some of the Salmon that enter Kell Bay and Bear Bay, Affleck Canal and some of the salmon that go into an un-named Bay inside of Conclusion Island and some going into Whale Passage be tagged so as to ascertain to what Creek or Creeks they go to spawn, as there are more salmon entering the above named ~~Bay~~ Bays than go into the Creeks at those places.

*This is on  
Pt. of Wales Id.  
about 2 or 3  
miles south of  
Pt. Chigayo.*

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The writer also recommends that those fishing for Winter King Salmon in the small bays and Inlets not be allowed to use any longer nets than 20 fathoms or 25 fathoms at the outside. This will enable the hand-trollers to get closer to the salmon that are feeding along the beach in the small bays and inlets.

The writer also recommends that there be some regulations made with regard to the size of the King Salmon. There have been so many small ones taken that if the buyers are prevented from buying young King Salmon under 8 pounds there would be no incentive for the trollers when they get into a school of young salmon to take them as long as they will take the hook, which fishermen say they do now.

Respectively submitted.

*M. J. O'Connor*

M. J. O'Connor, Warden.

*Discussed above recommendations  
with Mr. O'Malley. No action now.  
MJB.*

*1/3/25*